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**Box PATENT APPLICATION**  
**Assistant Commissioner for Patents**  
**Washington, DC 20231**

New U.S. Patent Application  
Title: METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR PREDICTING AIRLINE SEAT  
AVAILABILITY  
Inventors: Russell L. Strothmann, et al.

Sir:

We enclose the following papers for filing in the United States Patent and Trademark Office in connection with the above patent application.

1. Application - 25 pages, including cover sheet, 6 independent claims and 39 claims total.
2. Drawings - 4 sheets of informal drawings (Figures 1-4).
3. Declaration and Power of Attorney.
4. Recordation Form Cover Sheet and Assignment.
5. A check for \$1,332.00 representing a \$710.00 filing fee, \$582.00 for additional claims, and \$40.00 for recording the Assignment.

Please address all correspondence with respect to this application to:

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Please accord this application a serial number and filing date and record and return the Assignment to the undersigned.

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Assistant Commissioner for Patents

October 26, 2000

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The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional filing fees due and any other fees due under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or §1.17 during the pendency of this application to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: October 26, 2000

By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
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UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR PREDICTING

AIRLINE SEAT AVAILABILITY

BY

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## **DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

### **Field of the Invention**

This invention relates generally to methods and systems for predicting availability of a given inventory resource. In particular, the present invention comprises a method and system for predicting the future availability of a travel inventory resource given historical inventory data. The present invention also comprises a method and system for increasing reliability of booking airline travel itineraries by optimal use of inventory data sources.

### **Background of the Invention**

In the travel industry, customers wishing to purchase tickets for travel generally begin by placing a request for a particular travel itinerary, either personally using an on-line or telephone-based reservation system or through a travel agent or travel provider. The customer's travel request may include, for example, proposed dates, departure location, and arrival location. In response, the customer is typically presented with a proposed itinerary and quoted the current price for the proposed itinerary. At this point, the customer generally must make a decision whether to purchase the ticket immediately. Customers wishing to wait before committing to the purchase may opt to place the ticket on hold, which, if the option is available, allows the customer to reserve the specific itinerary for a short period, typically 24 hours, with no guarantees that the price be the same at time of purchase. In a volatile travel market, ticket prices for travel, particularly for airline travel, are adjusted frequently, often several times in a single day, adding great uncertainty to placing a travel itinerary on hold.

Customers may want to place travel reservations on hold for a variety of reasons. Customers may need to first verify travel plans and coordinate travel with another party. Some customers may wish to wait and see if a preferred itinerary becomes available. Customers for whom price is a concern may want to wait and see if the travel price decreases. Once a ticket is purchased, however, the customer must often pay fees to cancel or change the itinerary.

Conventional systems, however, typically allow customers to place an itinerary on hold for only a limited time period, such as 24 hours. Placing an itinerary on hold in the conventional fashion may provide the customer with an extra day of flexibility but, after this brief time has lapsed, the customer is once again faced with immediately purchasing the ticket or again placing the itinerary on hold. Using conventional travel reservation systems, such as SABRE, EDS', System One, Covia, World Span, and proprietary reservation systems run by airlines, customers are not provided with information regarding the likelihood that a preferred travel itinerary will remain available for booking in the future. Travel providers, travel agents and other booking agents would also like to be able to offer this information to customers that seek advice regarding this decision about whether to make an immediate purchase or to defer the decision to purchase.

Travel providers face a related problem. Travel providers seek to maximize revenue by selling all available seats in the travel resource, such as a plane, train, or bus. To facilitate maximum revenue, travel providers typically offer seats in the travel resource in various "booking classes," which vary, for example, in price, availability, and restrictions. Airlines, for example, offer seats

on an airplane within Passenger Name Record ("PNR") booking classes, such as "Y," "Q," and "L," to name a few. A ticket in "Y" class, for example, may be a full fare coach ticket with no restrictions as to when it can be booked or whether it can be changed. Tickets in "L" class, however, while offered at a significantly reduced fare price, may require a 14-day advance purchase. Similarly, tickets in "Q" class might support a fare rule that requires only a three-day advance purchase.

Since travel providers, such as airlines, seek to make use of all available seats, while maximizing sales of the higher revenue tickets, the providers tend to offer fewer seats in each of the descending classes. For instance, if there were three classes "Y," "Q," and "L" for a flight on an airplane having 100 seats, an airline might initially offer 100 seats in "Y" class, 50 seats in "Q" class, and 25 seats in "L" class. By doing so, the airline is not offering 175 seats, but rather indicating a preference for the higher revenue classes, so that as tickets are purchased, and the travel resource begins to fill up, the remaining seats will always be in the higher classes. As each ticket is sold, the number of available seats in each class is reduced by one to ensure that lower revenue tickets are not sold at the expense of the higher revenue tickets. Continuing with the above example, it would be possible for all of the 100 "Y" class tickets to be sold, but there will be a maximum of 50 and 25 sold in the "Q" and "L" classes, respectively. Once the lower revenue classes are sold, those persons needing to travel will have to purchase the higher-revenue tickets. Similarly, on those flights

that are not full, the opportunity to purchase lower priced tickets will ideally maximize ticket sales because of the discounted prices.

Electronic reservation systems, such as SABRE, allow travel providers, travel agents, and other booking services to all book and reserve seats essentially simultaneously. While seats are being booked and reserved by multiple services essentially simultaneously, it becomes a challenge to maintain accurate records of the number of remaining seats in each class. A particular airline will presumably have accurate records of seat availability for its own flights, but depending on how a central reservation service obtains its seat availability information, the central reservation service's information may not be perfectly synchronized with actual seat availability.

In the airline industry, central reservation systems employ at least two different models for updating the inventory of available seats. Using an Availability Status model ("AVS"), a central reservation system periodically accesses the host computers of travel providers, checks inventory for all travel resources, and stores the information locally. When the central reservation system receives a request to check availability for a certain travel resource, the system simply returns a result based the local information that has been stored since the most recent check. Since a reservation system typically incurs charges each time it accesses a database, using AVS is cost efficient because, in the AVS system, remote databases with associated access charges are accessed only periodically. Using AVS may be unreliable, however, because a certain travel resource may sell out between system updates, thereby causing

overbooking, or a seat may become available unbeknownst to the reservation system, thereby resulting in a lost sale.

By contrast, central reservation systems using the method of Direct Connect Availability ("DCA") do not suffer from this potential unreliability, however they are significantly more expensive. These systems do not store information locally, but rather connect directly to an airline's seat availability database with every customer request. Therefore, central reservation systems using DCA are potentially more accurate than systems using AVS because the seat availability information is always current. Using DCA, however, is more expensive than AVS because the DCA system accesses databases more frequently than AVS and therefore generates more access fees than AVS.

Thus, the ideal balance between cost and benefit would be to use AVS except when it would be sufficiently likely to create a lost a sale or an over booking. The problem is that there is currently no available technology to determine when it is safe to use AVS and when it is sufficiently important to use DCA.

### **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

In accordance with the invention, Methods and systems consistent with the present invention overcome the shortcomings of existing systems by predicting travel resource availability. Such methods and systems first obtain a candidate itinerary. The method then determines a probability that the candidate itinerary will remain available for booking for a period of time, and then outputs the probability. The method may obtain the candidate itinerary by receiving a

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customer request for travel, and selecting from a list of flights a candidate itinerary that satisfies the customer request.

The method may determine the probability by calculating the probability that the client itinerary will be available based upon historical availability information. The method may determine when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable for booking based on fare rules. The method may output a probability by predicting when the itinerary will become unavailable after a lower-priced itinerary has become unavailable. The method may calculate the probability by predicting when the itinerary will close in relation to a flight departure date. The method may also calculate the likelihood that an unavailable itinerary will become available again.

A method consistent with the present invention increases the reliability of booking airline travel itineraries by obtaining a candidate itinerary including availability information and determining whether the availability information should be updated based on the candidate itinerary.

A method consistent with the present invention may select an availability source by obtaining availability information from at least two sources, determining differences between the availability information from the sources, and discarding availability information rendered irrelevant by fare rules.

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## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING**

For a more complete understanding of the present invention and its advantages, reference is made to the following description in conjunction with the following drawings in which:

FIG. 1 shows the steps of predicting the availability of a travel itinerary consistent with the present invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates an exemplary output of a method consistent with the present invention.

FIG. 3 shows the steps of a method for generating probability and situation tables based upon past availability information consistent with the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps of a method for increasing reliability of booking airline travel itineraries.

## **DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

Reference will now be made in detail to an implementation consistent with the principles of the present invention as illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Wherever possible, the same reference numbers will be used throughout the drawings and the following description to refer to the same or like parts.

FIG. 1 shows the steps of predicting the availability of a travel itinerary consistent with the present invention. The process of predicting availability is initiated by obtaining a customer request (step 100). This request can be obtained via several channels including talking to a travel agent, accessing an

on-line reservation system such as Sabre or American Airlines, or via other modes of correspondence. A customer request includes, for example, the desired departure location, arrival location, and number of passengers. A customer request may optionally include a desired date or date ranges, flight times, PNR booking class, airlines, airports or price range.

In step 105, one or more candidate itineraries are generated based on the customer request. A candidate itinerary is a specific flight that meets the customer request requirements, such as, for example, a specific airline and flight number on a specific date. A flight number represents a distinct departure time and arrival time at distinct airports, and may or may not include stops.

Next, for each candidate itinerary, availability information is collected from conventional global distribution systems (GDS) such as Sabre, World Span, Amadeus and Galileo (step 110). For each flight, the GDS typically provides the number of seats that are currently available for booking within each fare class.

Next, each candidate itinerary is compared to the number of currently available seats within each class to determine whether there are adequate seats in any of the booking classes to satisfy the customer request (step 120). If there are not sufficient currently available seats to book the candidate itinerary, the candidate itinerary is discarded (step 125).

If the availability information indicates that there are sufficient currently available seats to book the candidate itinerary, the probability that the candidate itinerary will continue to be available for the number of passengers requested by the client is determined (step 130). In one embodiment consistent with the

present invention, the probability that a candidate itinerary will remain open is predicted by looking up the candidate itinerary in a probability table that represents a historical percentage of instances that the flight in the candidate itinerary remained open for certain periods of time. As indicated in FIG. 2, a probability table consistent with the present invention may be generated by computing the percentage of times the flight remained open under other similar situations. For example, if a candidate itinerary comprises an airline and flight number, a probability table consistent with the present invention may contain, for example, percentages representing the number of times that the same airline and flight number in previous situations closed one week before departure, three days before departure, and one day before departure.

Additionally, a probability table consistent with the present invention may indicate, for example, the likelihood that a currently-closed booking class will reopen. In the airline industry, it is quite common to adjust the inventory of available seats based on booking demand. If a currently closed booking class is on a flight that still has many seats remaining, for example, the airline may reopen the booking class by adding available seats to the inventory of that booking class. By analyzing the past trends of reopening booking classes based on the current state of availability, it is possible to reasonably predict whether the class will reopen within a certain period of time such as, for example, the next 7 days.

In step 130, the candidate itinerary is compared to entries in the probability table to determine the duration and probability the candidate itinerary

will remain open. Based upon this comparison step, the number of days and percentage probability that the candidate itinerary will remain available. This process is repeated for each candidate itinerary. Finally, this information is provided to the customer in step 140.

5           FIG. 2 is an example of the output to the customer. Section 200 shows a candidate itinerary and section 210 indicates the cost of the candidate itinerary. Section 220 indicates the number of days and percentage probability that the candidate itinerary in section 200 will remain available for booking.

10           FIG. 3 shows the steps of a method for generating probability and situation tables based upon past availability information consistent with the present invention. In one embodiment of the present invention, a situation table contains candidate itinerary parameters (e.g. airline, flight number, number of passengers and day of week) for which an analysis of historical availability information has indicated current availability information must be obtained prior to  
15           booking. For example, in step 300, flight availability information is collected for multiple candidate itineraries. For each candidate itinerary, the system queries the probability table in the database. In step 310, if a probability record is found with matching candidate itinerary parameters, the probability is updated based upon the currently collected availability information (step 320). If a record is not  
20           found in the probability table, a new probability record is created (step 315).

          In step 330, the method compares the AVS and DCA data for the candidate itinerary to determine differences in availability information. For each booking class, the method compares the AVS data for that class with the

corresponding DCA data. For illustrative purposes only, the method is explained with reference to the availability data in Example 1 shown below. Example 1 shows AVS and DCA availability information for a candidate itinerary ten days prior to departure. In each two letter/number combination, the letter represents a booking class while the number represents the number of currently available seats that the data source type (AVS or DCA) is showing.

Example 1

Test date: Ten days prior to departure.

In AVS: Y7 B7 H7 Q7 K7 L4 N0 T0

In DCA: Y7 B7 H7 Q7 K5 L2 N0 T0

In Example 1, comparing the AVS and DCA data for class K reveals a difference of two seats, as does a comparison of available seats in class L. If, for example, a customer requests three seats in L class, the AVS data would indicate that a candidate itinerary with three seats is available for booking, while DCA data indicates that the flight is already too full to accommodate the candidate itinerary. A difference would also occur when AVS indicates that the client itinerary cannot be satisfied for lack of available seats, but DCA indicates that adequate seats have become available. If comparison of the AVS and DCA data indicates that the AVS data does not differ from the DCA data, there is no need to update the data with DCA information (step 332). If, however, the AVS data is different than the DCA data, generally, when faced with this candidate itinerary, the reservation system should obtain more current availability information using DCA before booking the candidate itinerary. The situation

table for that candidate itinerary therefore indicates that DCA information should be obtained.

In one embodiment of the present invention, even if a difference is detected, DCA data will be used when an error threshold is exceeded. In this event, if a difference between AVS and DCA data is detected, it is first determined whether the difference exceeds an error threshold, such as, for example, 98% (step 334). If the error threshold is exceeded, this candidate itinerary is annotated in the situation table as one when DCA availability information should be obtained before booking (step 338). If the error threshold is not exceeded, the situation table may indicate that use of AVS data is sufficiently accurate (step 336).

In another embodiment of the present invention, the situation table will indicate that AVS data may be relied upon with sufficient accuracy and that updating with DCA data is not warranted. For example, AVS data may be used when the availability data forms a downward progression, that is, the availability decreases as the class level decreases. Where the data forms a downward progression, certain predictions can be reliably made based on the AVS data. For example, if all the classes lower than class K have been closed or rendered irrelevant by the fare rules, generally class K will soon close as well and it is not necessary to check the data using DCA. These special situations may be reflected in the situation table.

In step 350, the situation table is modified based on fare rules. For example, booking class L may require a 14-day advance purchase. In Example

1, however, the candidate itinerary has been requested only ten days in advance of departure. In this case, it does not matter that the DCA data may be more accurate because class L cannot be booked. In this case, the situation table will indicate that AVS data is sufficient.

5 In creating the situation tables, accounting for passenger impact is another major consideration. An incorrect booking that involves four passengers, for example, has more overall effect than one that involves only a single passenger.

FIG. 4 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps of a method for increasing reliability of booking airline travel itineraries based on number of passengers.

10 The system begins by obtaining a candidate itinerary (step 400). In step 410, a reservation system implementing the methods of the present invention looks up the candidate itinerary in a situation table consistent with the present invention to determine whether the current availability information may be relied upon. If a situation similar to the candidate itinerary exists, the situation table will indicate  
15 whether the availability information for this candidate itinerary should be updated prior to booking. If the situation table indicates that DCA should be used (step 420), the availability information for this candidate itinerary is updated using DCA (step 425). If it indicates that updating will not increase reliability, the current flight availability information is used (step 430).

20 Modifications of this invention will occur to those skilled in the art. Therefore it is to be understood that this invention is not limited to the particular method and system disclosed, but that it is intended to cover all modifications which are within the scope of this invention as claimed.



**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. A computer implemented method for predicting travel resource availability comprising the steps:

receiving a candidate itinerary;

determining a probability that the candidate itinerary will remain available

5 for booking for a period of time; and

outputting the probability.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of receiving a candidate itinerary further comprises:

10 receiving a customer request for travel; and

selecting a candidate itinerary that satisfies the customer request.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of determining a probability comprises the step of:

15 calculating a probability that the client itinerary will be available for booking based upon historical availability information.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable for

20 booking based on fare rules.

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5. The method of claim 3 wherein the step of determining a probability further comprises:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable given that a lower-priced itinerary has become unavailable.

5

6. The method of claim 3 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable based upon a flight departure date.

10

7. The method of claim 3 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

determining a probability that an unavailable itinerary will become available.

15

8. A method for increasing reliability of booking airline travel itineraries comprising the steps of:

obtaining a candidate itinerary including availability information; and

determining whether the availability information should be updated based

20 on the candidate itinerary and a situation table.

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9. The method of claim 8 further comprising:  
creating the situation table comprising sample itineraries and historical  
availability information.

5 10. The method of claim 8 further comprising:  
dynamically updating the situation table based on the availability  
information.

10 11. The method of claim 9, wherein creating a situation table  
comprises:  
obtaining availability information from at least two data sources based on  
the candidate itinerary;  
determining a difference between the availability information from the at  
least two sources; and  
15 storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information  
should be updated prior to booking, wherein the indication is based on the  
difference.

20 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the storing step further comprises:  
storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information  
should be updated prior to booking but only when the candidate itinerary is not  
rendered irrelevant by fare rules.

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13. The method of claim 11 wherein the storing step further comprises:  
storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information  
should be updated prior to booking but only when a difference between the  
availability information from the at least two sources exceeds an error threshold.

5

14. A system for predicting travel resource availability implemented on  
a computer, the system comprising:

means for receiving a candidate itinerary;

means for determining a probability that the candidate itinerary will remain

10 available for booking for a period of time; and

means for outputting the probability.

15. The system of claim 14 further comprising:

means for receiving a customer request for travel; and

15 means for selecting a candidate itinerary that satisfies the customer  
request.

16. The system of claim 15, further comprising:

means for calculating a probability that the client itinerary will be available

20 for booking based upon historical availability information.

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17. The system of claim 16, further comprising:

means for determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable for booking based on fare rules.

5 18. The system of claim 16 wherein the means for determining a probability further comprises:

means for determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable given that a lower-priced itinerary has become unavailable.

10 19. The system of claim 16 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

means for determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable based upon a flight departure date.

15 20. The system of claim 16 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

means for determining a probability that an unavailable itinerary will become available.

20 21. A system for increasing reliability of booking airline travel itineraries implemented on a computer, the system comprising:

means for obtaining a candidate itinerary including availability information;  
and

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means for determining whether the availability information should be updated based on the candidate itinerary and a situation table.

22. The system of claim 21 further comprising:

means for creating the situation table comprising sample itineraries and historical availability information.

23. The system of claim 21 further comprising:

means for dynamically updating the situation table based on the availability information.

24. The system of claim 22, wherein the means for creating a situation table comprises:

means for obtaining availability information from at least two data sources based on the candidate itinerary;

means for determining a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources; and

means for storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking, wherein the indication is based on the difference.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein the means for storing further comprises:

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means for storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when the candidate itinerary is not rendered irrelevant by fare rules.

5           26.    The system of claim 24 wherein the means for storing further comprises:

              means for storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources exceeds an  
10   error threshold.

              27.    A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer to perform a method comprising the steps:  
                  receiving a candidate itinerary;  
                  determining a probability that the candidate itinerary will remain available  
15   for booking for a period of time; and  
                  outputting the probability.

              28.    The computer-readable medium of claim 27 wherein the step of receiving a candidate itinerary further comprises:  
20               receiving a customer request for travel; and  
                  selecting a candidate itinerary that satisfies the customer request.

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29. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, wherein the step of determining a probability comprises the step of:

calculating a probability that the client itinerary will be available for booking based upon historical availability information.

5

30. The computer-readable medium of claim 29, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable for booking based on fare rules.

10

31. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein the step of determining a probability further comprises:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable given that a lower-priced itinerary has become unavailable.

15

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable based upon a flight departure date.

20

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

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determining a probability that an unavailable itinerary will become available.

34. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer to perform a method of increasing reliability of booking airline travel itineraries comprising the steps of:

obtaining a candidate itinerary including availability information; and  
determining whether the availability information should be updated based on the candidate itinerary and a situation table.

35. The computer-readable medium of claim 34 wherein the method further comprises the step of:

creating the situation table comprising sample itineraries and historical availability information.

36. The computer-readable medium of claim 34 wherein the method further comprises the step of:

dynamically updating the situation table based on the availability information.

37. The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein the step of creating a situation table comprises the steps of:

obtaining availability information from at least two data sources based on

the candidate itinerary;

determining a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources; and

storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking, wherein the indication is based on the difference.

38. The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein the storing step further comprises:

storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when the candidate itinerary is not rendered irrelevant by fare rules.

39. The computer-readable medium of claim 37 wherein the storing step further comprises:

storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources exceeds an error threshold.

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Systems predict the availability of travel resources and select an appropriate data source for obtaining travel resource inventory availability information by analyzing historical travel resource availability data. Such systems receive customer travel requests and determine candidate itineraries.

- 5 The candidate itineraries are used to determine the probability that the candidate itineraries will remain available for certain periods of time based on historical availability information and fare rules. Such systems increase the reliability of booking travel itineraries by determining when it is necessary to obtain updated availability information. The systems make this determination by looking up
- 10 candidate itineraries in a situation table calculated from historical availability information.

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graph TD; START([START]) --> 100[Obtain a Customer Request]; 100 --> 105[Generate Candidate Itinerary Based on Customer Request]; 105 --> 110[Collect Flight Availability Information for Candidate Itinerary]; 110 --> 120{Candidate Itinerary Available?}; 120 -- No --> 125[Determine Probability Candidate Itinerary Will Become Available]; 125 --> 140[Advise Requestor of the Availability of Candidate Itinerary]; 120 -- Yes --> 130[Determine Duration and Probability Candidate Itinerary will Remain Available]; 130 --> 140; 140 --> END([END]);
```

The flowchart illustrates the process for determining the availability of a candidate itinerary. It begins with a **START** terminal, leading to the process of **Obtain a Customer Request** (100). This is followed by **Generate Candidate Itinerary Based on Customer Request** (105) and **Collect Flight Availability Information for Candidate Itinerary** (110). A decision point (120) asks if the **Candidate Itinerary Available?**. If the answer is **No**, the process moves to **Determine Probability Candidate Itinerary Will Become Available** (125). If the answer is **Yes**, it moves to **Determine Duration and Probability Candidate Itinerary will Remain Available** (130). Both paths (125 and 130) lead to the final process step, **Advise Requestor of the Availability of Candidate Itinerary** (140), which concludes at the **END** terminal.

Fig. 1

## Availability Predictor

**You have selected the following itinerary for one person**

Selected Airline	Flight Number	Departure Date	Departure City	Departure Time	Arrival City	Arrival Time
American	1665	March 29, 2000	Cincinnati	8:00AM	Dallas/Ft. Worth	9:44AM
American	1422	April 6, 2000	Dallas/Ft. Worth	8:00AM	Dallas/Ft. Worth	12:20PM

**These flights are available for booking today for a total cost of \$380.00.**

**Analysis of booking patterns for these flights indicates the following  
Probability these flights will close within the stated time period from today.**

2 Days	30%	
4 Days	50%	220
7 Days	80%	

All fares are subject to change at any time and are not guaranteed until purchased and ticketed.

**Fig. 2**

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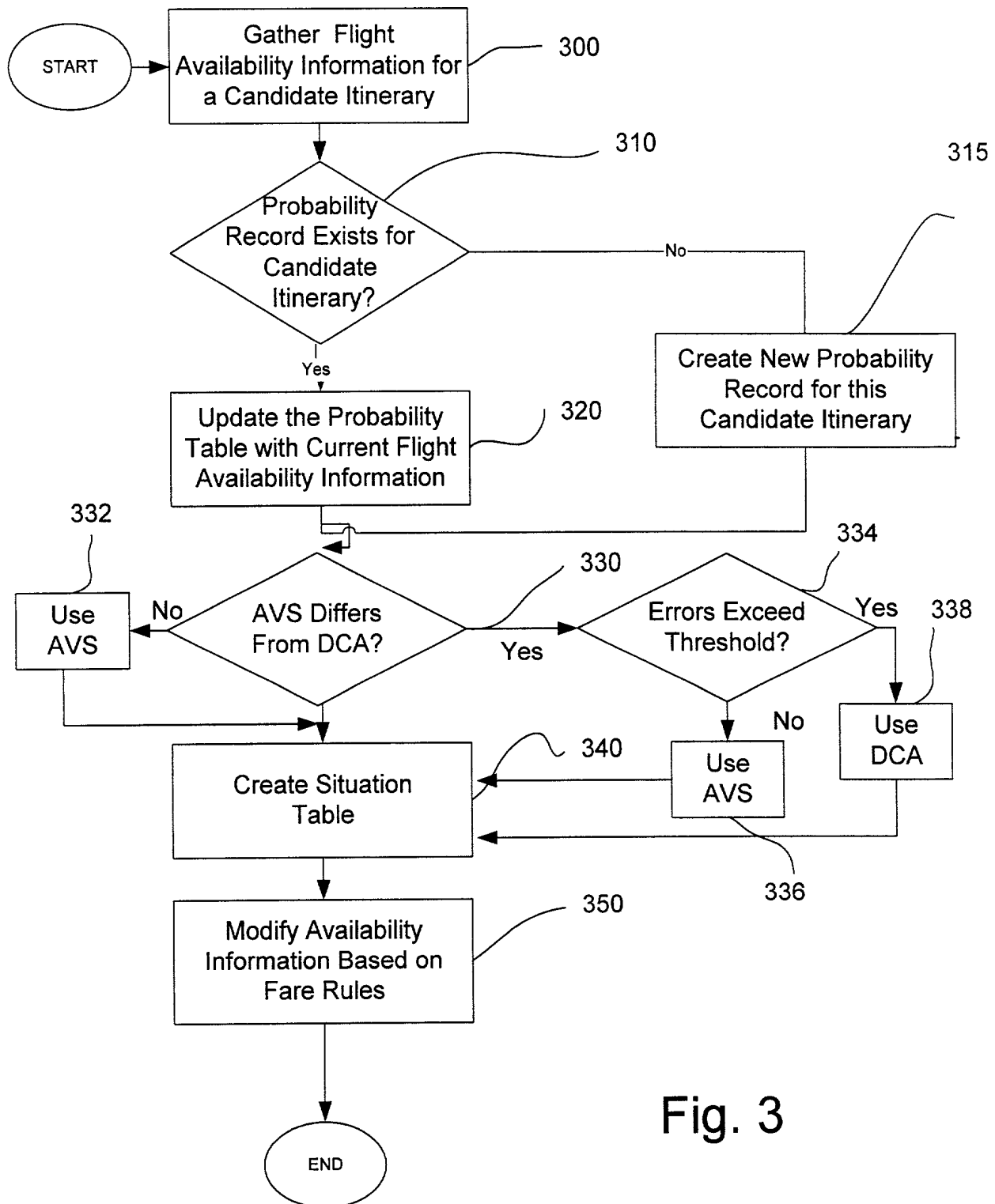
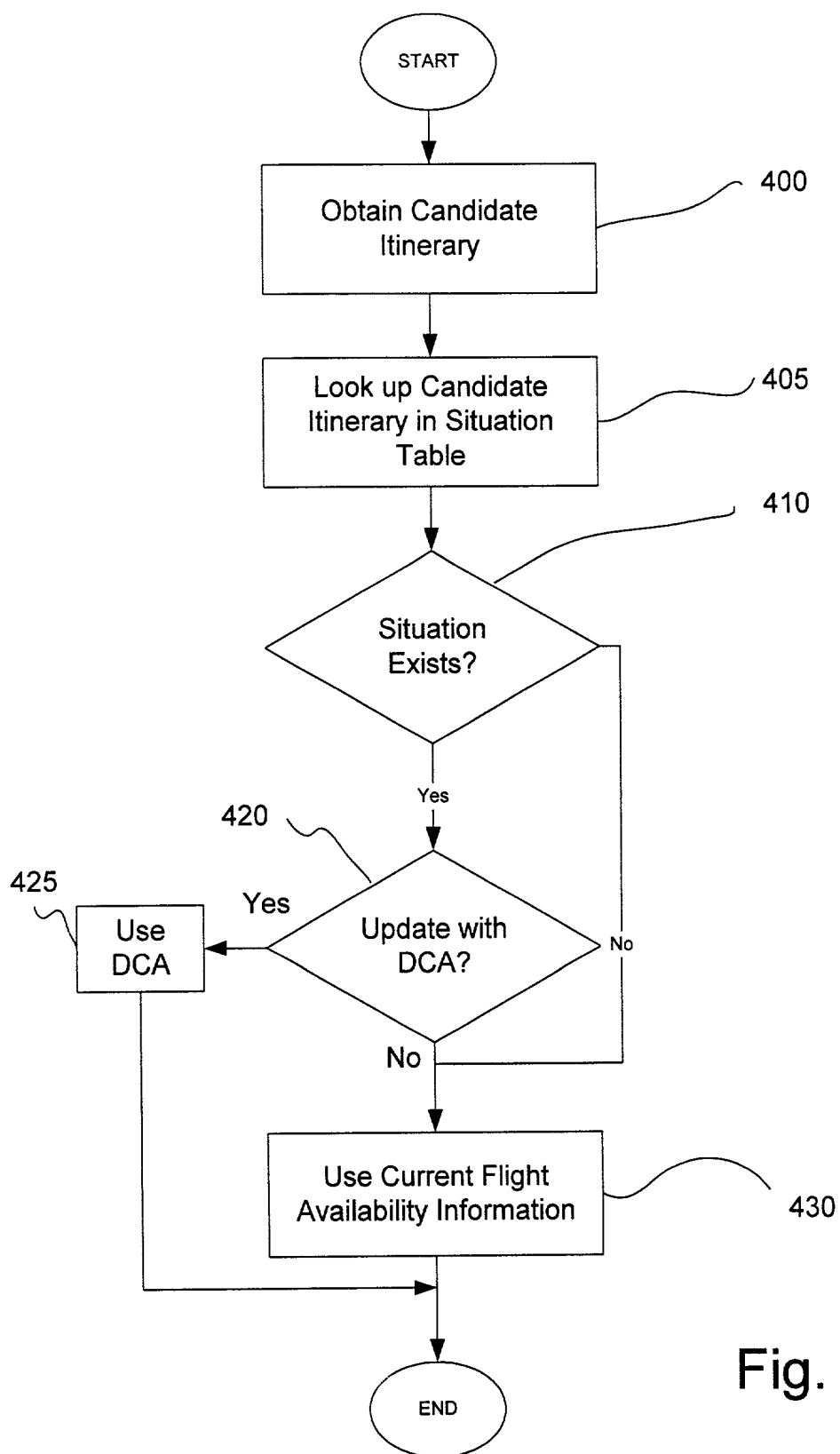


Fig. 3

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the study population	
Age (years)	50.0 ± 10.0
Gender	
Male	50.0%
Female	50.0%
Marital status	
Married	80.0%
Single	20.0%
Education level	
High school or above	60.0%
Below high school	40.0%
Occupation	
White collar	30.0%
Blue collar	70.0%
Income (USD/month)	
< 1000	20.0%
1000-2000	40.0%
> 2000	40.0%
Health status	
Good	80.0%
Poor	20.0%
Smoking status	
Smoker	30.0%
Non-smoker	70.0%
Alcohol consumption	
Regular	20.0%
Occasional	30.0%
Never	50.0%
Family size	
1-2	30.0%
3-4	40.0%
> 4	30.0%
Health insurance	
Yes	80.0%
No	20.0%
Comorbidities	
Hypertension	20.0%
Diabetes	10.0%
Cholesterol	15.0%
Obesity	25.0%
Depression	10.0%
Other	10.0%



**Fig. 4**

## DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that: my residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name; I believe I am the original, first, and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first, and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled: METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR PREDICTING AIRLINE SEAT AVAILABILITY, the specification of which ☒ is attached and/or ☐ was filed on [Date] as United States Application Serial No. [Text] or PCT International Application No. [Text] and was amended on [Text] (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above. I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or § 365(a) of any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or any PCT International application(s) having a filing date before that of the application(s) of which priority is claimed:

Country	Application Number	Date of Filing	Priority Claimed Under 35 U.S.C. 119
			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

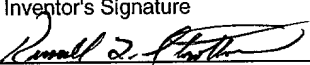
Application Number	Date of Filing

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 120 of any United States application(s) or § 365(c) of any PCT International application(s) designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application(s) in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application(s) and the national or PCT International filing date of this application:


Application Number	Date of Filing	Status (Patented, Pending, Abandoned)

I hereby appoint the following attorney and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. **FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.**, Douglas B. Henderson, Reg. No. 20,291; Ford F. Farabow, Jr., Reg. No. 20,630; Arthur S. Garrett, Reg. No. 20,338; Donald R. Dunner, Reg. No. 19,073; Brian G. Brunsvold, Reg. No. 22,593; Tipton D. Jennings, IV, Reg. No. 20,645; Jerry D. Voight, Reg. No. 23,020; Laurence R. Hefter, Reg. No. 20,827; Kenneth E. Payne, Reg. No. 23,098; Herbert H. Mintz, Reg. No. 26,691; C. Larry O'Rourke, Reg. No. 26,014; Albert J. Santorelli, Reg. No. 22,610; Michael C. Elmer, Reg. No. 25,857; Richard H. Smith, Reg. No. 20,609; Stephen L. Peterson, Reg. No. 26,325; John M. Romary, Reg. No. 26,331; Bruce C. Zotter, Reg. No. 27,680; Dennis P. O'Reilly, Reg. No. 27,932; Allen M. Sokal, Reg. No. 26,695; Robert D. Bajefsky, Reg. No. 25,387; Richard L. Stroup, Reg. No. 28,478; David W. Hill, Reg. No. 28,220; Thomas L. Irving, Reg. No. 28,619; Charles E. Lipsey, Reg. No. 28,165; Thomas W. Winland, Reg. No. 27,605; Basil J. Lewis, Reg. No. 28,818; Martin I. Fuchs, Reg. No. 28,508; E. Robert Yoches, Reg. No. 30,120; Barry W. Graham, Reg. No. 29,924; Susan Haberman Griffen, Reg. No. 30,907; Richard B. Racine, Reg. No. 30,415; Thomas H. Jenkins, Reg. No. 30,857; Robert E. Converse, Jr., Reg. No. 27,432; Clair X. Mullen, Jr., Reg. No. 20,348; Christopher P. Foley, Reg. No. 31,354; John C. Paul, Reg. No. 30,413; Roger D. Taylor, Reg. No. 28,992; David M. Kelly, Reg. No. 30,953; Kenneth J. Meyers, Reg. No. 25,146; Carol P. Einaudi, Reg. No. 32,220; Walter Y. Boyd, Jr., Reg. No. 31,738; Steven M. Anzalone, Reg. No. 32,095; Jean B. Fordis, Reg. No. 32,984; Barbara C. McCurdy, Reg. No. 32,120; James K. Hammond, Reg. No. 31,964; Richard V. Burgujian, Reg. No. 31,744; J. Michael Jakes, Reg. No. 32,824; Thomas W. Banks, Reg. No. 32,719; Christopher P. Isaac, Reg. No. 32,616; Bryan C. Diner, Reg. No. 32,409; M. Paul Barker, Reg. No. 32,013; Andrew Chanho Sonu, Reg. No. 33,457; David S. Forman, Reg. No. 33,694; Vincent P. Kovalick, Reg. No. 32,867; James W. Edmondson, Reg. No. 33,871; Michael R. McGurk, Reg. No. 32,045; Joann M. Neth, Reg. No. 36,363; Gerson S. Panitch, Reg. No. 33,751; Cheri M. Taylor, Reg. No. 33,216; Charles E. Van Horn, Reg. No. 40,266; Linda A. Wadler, Reg. No. 33,218; Jeffrey A. Berkowitz, Reg. No. 36,743; Michael R. Kelly, Reg. No. 33,921; James B. Monroe, Reg. No. 33,971; Doris Johnson Hines, Reg. No. 34,629; Allen R. Jensen, Reg. No. 28,224; Lori Ann Johnson, Reg. No. 34,498; and David A. Manspeizer, Reg. No. 37,540, Linda J. Thayer, Reg. No. 45,681 and Debbie Segers Reg. No. 40,805. Please address all correspondence to **FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.** 1300 I Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, Telephone No. (202) 408-4000.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

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